New Telephone Lines

862. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the plans of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for providing new telephone lines this year are in state of suspended animation;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor with details;

(c) whether it is a fact that DoT is likely to fall woefully short of its target of providing three million new telephone lines during the current financial year;

(d) if so, the cogent reasons for such a failure of DoT to meet the needs of the people;

(e) whether it is a fact that the DoT is facing a financial crunch and lacks resources for expanasion;

(f) if so, whether it is not a case of bad planning on the part of decision makers in the DoT; and

(g) if so, the reaons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d) The approved annual plan for 1994-95 of the Department of Telecommunications envisages provision of 14 lakh new telephone lines. However, with a view to expenditing the availability of a telephone on demand the Department has been endeavouring to raise additional resources beyond the plan outlay through innovative means of financing including deferred payment and leasing with the aim of providing 3 million new telephone lines during the current fiancial year. While there is no likelihood of a shortfall in the annual plan target, the enhanced target of 3 million lines which was based upon anticipated mobilisation of additional resources over and above the original plan outlay may fall short marginally due to unforeseen delay in obtaining additional funds through leasing and deferred payment system.

(e) to (g) The Department of Telecommunications is facing financial constraints for meeting the enhanced target of installing 3 million lines during the current fiancial year. However, it is expected that besides exceeding the original plan target of installings1.4 million lines during the year, in the long run adequate resources will be successfully mobilised for meeting the expansion programmes of the Department through alternate means of financing.

Corruption in D. O. T.

863. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the report published in Pioneer of 19th September, 1994 quoting an international journal to the effect that the DoT is a hot bed of corruption; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Legal action was initiated against the concerned International Journal in the Queen's Court in London consequent to which the journal has tendered an unconditional apology in the Court and paid substantial amount in damages for having published the article containing baseless and unsbustantiated allegations. Legal notices have also been issued to Indian Newspapers/Journals which have quoted the libellous report for